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The Unitarian Home Missionary College,

MANCHESTER.

THE STORY OF THE TARGUMS.

An Address

DELIVERED

AT THE OPENING OF THE SESSION 1901-1902,

OCTOBER 2nd, 1901,

BY

J. E. MANNING, M.A.

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The Story of the Targums.

I.—The TARGUMS are Aramaic Versions and paraphrases of parts of the Old Testament, made in Palestine for the benefit of the people when the Hebrew language began to fall into desuetude. Those we possess are all later than the time of Christ, but they represent traditional interpretations of the Old Testament from the time of Ezra, B.C. 458. Some are fairly literal translations of the Hebrew text; some are fanciful interpretations embodying legends and myths, together with matter that is the product of pure imagination. In them we have an early illustration of the threefold method of interpretation of the Bible that has prevailed from earliest times until our own day, viz., (i.) translation, (ii.) paraphrase, (iii.) commentary. In them also we see illustrated the difficulties and dangers of all these modes of exegesis.

Of literal translation in the Targums there is little enough as compared with the immense mass of paraphrase. The best example of literal translation is what is known as the Targum of Onkelos on the Pentateuch, which is of great value to the text critic, though it would be of greater value had we a carefully revised and well-authenticated text. Of paraphrastic commentary there is more than enough. The general term MIDRASH, study or exposition, is used of all that early Hebrew literature expository of the Scriptures to which the Targums themselves belong. Deutsch speaks of it as "the avalanche of Jewish literature which began silently to gather from the time of the return from the exile and went on rolling uninterruptedly,"—and, we may add, gathering in volume,—"until about a thousand years after the destruction of the second Temple." The various Midrashim are expository commentaries on the Old Testament Text. They take two chief forms, according to the nature of the interpretation they offer. Sometimes

it attempts to give an exact definition of the law and a practical exposition of terms. This interpretation was called by the Rabbins HALAḲAH (literally, the rule by which *to go*), and this became in time the traditional authoritative annotation to the Law. On the other hand, a more popular exposition is called the HAGGADAH (literally, what the expositor *said*, or *mused* about), which admitted of every variety of interpretation from simple religious precept and moral exhortation to the wildest flights of fancy,—legend, myth, allegory, parable, old traditions, and newly-invented stories. Whatever came into the writer's mind he jotted down without hesitation. What he especially avoids is rational interpretation. The Midrash is said to have originated with "the men of the Great Synagogue," a council of Scribes supposed to have been instituted by Ezra for the study and exposition of the Law. The critics of the Reformation period can tell you all about "the men of the Great Synagogue." John Buxtorf (1564-1629) gives, in his *Tiberias*,[1] a complete account of these men, their functions and the results of their labours, among which was the fixing of the Canon. But modern critics are very doubtful whether such an institution as "the Great Synagogue" ever existed, and are inclined to believe that many things of unknown origin in the period between Ezra and the Maccabees were ascribed to them as the Law is ascribed to Moses, the Psalms to David, and all wisdom to Solomon. Doubtless the increased study of the Law began in Ezra's time, and owed its impulse to him and his followers, who did what they could to fix the law as an authoritative guide to the people. They made "a hedge about the law," as the saying was.[2] Tradition magnified their work. Hence, in time, whatever there was in Jewish literature of unknown authorship dealing with the exposition of the Bible text, and more especially the exposition of the Law, was ascribed vaguely to "the men of the Great Synagogue."

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1. Ch. X. and XI. 2. Pirḳe Aboth I. i.

It will be understood from this that there is great uncertainty about the origin of the earliest Midrash, of which, as I have said, the Targums form part. We are, moreover, assured upon the highest authority,[1] that "all the names and dates hitherto commonly attached to the Targums must be rejected." Yet we can say with certainty that they represent interpretations of the Old Testament text handed down from soon after the Captivity, and though they contain much later matter in abundance, the Targums introduce us to the earliest exposition of the Scripture with which we are acquainted. Traces or reminiscences of ancient Halaḳah and Haggadah, "snatches of both in their liquid stages," as Deutsch calls them, are to be found in them all.

II.—For the beginning of their story we must go back to that period so momentous in its influence on subsequent Jewish history, the Exile.

It is said by some authorities that the Jews forgot their language during the Babylonian captivity, and adopted the language of the people among whom they dwelt, viz., the Western Aramaic, sometimes incorrectly called "Chaldee." The steady progress of this language in superseding the native tongue of Israel is a remarkable fact in their history, and it had important consequences. It had become the language of trade and commerce, and spread with great rapidity after the decline of the Phœnician cities along all the great trade routes from Carchemish on the north, as far as the Red Sea on the south. By the 5th century B.C. it had spread far and wide, and the returning exiles under Ezra found it already in Palestine (458 B.C.) It made very rapid progress after the exile. It had taken such a hold upon Judæa in the 4th century B.C. that, when that and neighbouring lands fell into the hands of Alexander the Great in 333 B.C., Greek was unable to supplant the predominant Aramaic. In the time of Jesus it was the common language of

1. Deutsch, "Remains," p. 329.

the people. He and his disciples spoke it. All the Semitic words in the New Testament are Aramaic. Hebrew remained the language of religious literature and of the law; but the Targums are evidence that, before the 1st century A.D., the people had ceased to use it in their ordinary speech. Yet it is not correct to say that the Jews forgot their Hebrew while in exile. They had undoubtedly mixed freely with their captors. They enjoyed many privileges in Babylonia. They had become rich by trade. Some had been raised to positions of dignity and importance. Many were unwilling to leave the enjoyment of their present advantages when the chance was offered for return. Yet they had then, as now, kept themselves distinct, and had preserved their own language. The people for whom the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah were uttered (c. 520 B.C.) are not likely to have forgotten their mother tongue; and even a century later the prophecy of Malachi (c. 432) was written for them in good Hebrew.

At the same time it is not to be supposed that during their captivity the Jews had been entirely uninfluenced by their surroundings. All, except probably the most conservative, had acquired a knowledge of Aramaic, and used it in their daily business and intercourse with Western traders. Many must have returned home bi-linguists, and doubtless more came under Ezra (458 B.C.) than under Zerubbabel (538 B.C.). Later on, every fresh arrival from the land of captivity must have brought children who spoke Aramaic with fluency.

Meantime, in Palestine, great changes had taken place. Aramaic was everywhere known. Mixed marriages were frequent; and Nehemiah (432 B.C.) saw, with alarm, that the children of these marriages "could not speak in the Jews' language" (Neh. 13 ^{24}). It is clear that at this time Aramaic had taken a prominent hold on the people, and the "holy tongue" was becoming less understood.

Hence in time it was found necessary in the synagogue,

where the law was read in Hebrew as a sacred duty, to have an interpreter (Methûrgemân)[1] present, to translate each verse as it was uttered by the Reader; and in process of time those who thus interpreted the law came to be a recognised official class. They do not appear to have been held in much respect. They were often poor men who received pay for their work, thus making the law, as it was said, "a spade to dig with," and that too on the Sabbath. Their ragged garments and neglected appearance, their airs of superiority or indifference, did not tend to make them acceptable to the people. Moreover, in their translations they were frequently tempted to paraphrase, and to add more than the text warranted; and hence they were sometimes interrupted by expressions of dissent from those who understood the meaning of the Hebrew as well, or perhaps better, than they. Rules were, accordingly, laid down for their guidance, which throw an interesting light on their ways in the Synagogue. They must follow, and not anticipate, the Reader. They must interpret only one verse at a time, except in the prophets, when three verses might be read. They must not speak too loud, or in a sing-song voice. They must not lean against a pillar in a listless attitude. They must not use a written Targum. At a later time the rule is laid down that no Methûrgemân must be under 50, so that we may presume that sometimes young men had ventured to do work which they were not fit for. The Midrash is never complimentary to them; it explains the "fools" referred to in Eccles. 7^{5} and 9^{17}, saying "these are the Methûrgemanîm." The Talmud says if the interpreter translates a word literally, not giving its proper meaning, he is a liar; if he adds to it, he is a blasphemer; but inasmuch as he is blamed for translating Exod. 24^{10} "They saw the God of Israel" quite literally, for it ought to be, says the Talmud, "They gazed upon the Glory of the God of Israel,"

1. From which our *dragoman* is derived. Arab. tarjumán; late Gk. δραγόυμανος, Span. dragoman.

(which is certainly not in the Hebrew), he was surely in a hard case; blamed when he was right, and railed at when he was wrong. Rules are further laid down as to certain portions of the law which he may or may not translate. Some passages, likely to give offence, are to be read but not translated; some, though hardly suitable for public reading, might be read and translated, because they carried a lesson with them, the sin involving its own punishment. Some might neither be read nor translated.

In time a habit of free and expanded translation, or paraphrase, became common with these extemporaneous interpreters; and later still, the introduction of legend, allegory and fable was a favourite mode of exegesis. Hence the Targums now extant are of different dates, and of varying character, some being more literal than others (and therefore for the purposes of textual criticism more valuable). The period during which they arose extends from the second to the twelfth century A.D. At first they were not put into writing. The work of the interpreter was purely oral. There was no uniformity in their translations, though the sense was for the most part preserved. In time, however, it was thought necessary to prevent deviations from the text, and bring about a greater uniformity of translation. In the second century, apparently, it became not unusual to write down the translation,—not for use in the synagogue, for there the oral Targum alone was sanctioned; but with the object of restraining the vagaries of imaginative or ignorant interpreters. As these multiplied the need of uniformity became more and more apparent, and about the beginning of the 4th century A.D. an attempt was made in Babylon, where the Jews had excellent schools at Sora, Pumbeditha and elsewhere, to fix the Targumic text, which now of necessity assumed the character of an authorised version. Yet it must be clearly understood that no Targum ever assumed equality with the Hebrew text. The one was a useful guide to the people; the

other remained the sole source and representative of the ancient law.

III.—There are extant three Targums on the Pentateuch or portions of it, (i), The TARGUM ONKELOS, dating from the 4th century A.D.; (ii.) The JERUSALEM TARGUM, consisting of fragments and terse summaries, dating from the 7th century; (iii.), the so-called TARGUM OF THE PSEUDO-JONATHAN, an expansion of the foregoing, belonging probably to the 8th century. We have also a TARGUM ON THE PROPHETS, earlier and later, called the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel, belonging to the 4th century, next in value of all the Targums to that of Onkelos; TARGUMS ON THE HAGIOGRAPHA, Proverbs, Psalms, Job, and the five Megilloth (rolls), the Song, Ruth, Lamentations, Esther, Ecclesiastes, belonging to the 9th or 10th century; a TARGUM ON CHRONICLES, not known until the 17th century, and containing references which point to a late date, such as the mention of Hungary; a TARGUM ON DANIEL, belonging perhaps to the 12th century. There is also extant a SAMARITAN ARAMAIC TARGUM, following the Samaritan text of the Pentateuch, and more literal than any of the Jewish Targums.

Of the majority of these I need say little. The dates are late, the authors unknown. Generally speaking, they are the work of many writers, who edited and "improved" through long periods. The Jerusalem Targum refers to Germany as among the dominions of the Sons of Japheth. It gives information not found in the Hebrew: *e.g.*, in Gen. 33 4 we read "Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and fell upon his neck and kissed him. Esau wept because of the numbness of his teeth. But Jacob wept because of the smoothness of his neck," the story being, according to the Rabbins, that Esau intended to bite Jacob, but that Jacob's neck was changed to alabaster and fragments clung to Esau's teeth. You may see the marks to this day in the *puncta extraordinaria* in the Massoretic text,—a sad monument of the

evil effects of a brother's malice. The Targum of the Pseudo-Jonathan refers to Constantinople as a sinful city, and gives the names of Mohammed's wives, assigning them to Ishmael (Gen. 21 21). Its angelology is extensive, for we are told in Exod. 12 12 that nine millions of angels went forth with Jhvh to punish the Egyptians on the night of the Exodus. Its expansion of Deut. 33 11 introduces us to the period of John Hyrcanus, King and High Priest, B.C. 135—105, one of the most brilliant in the history of the Jews. It prays Jhvh "to break the loins of Ahab and of the false prophets, that there may not be any standing room for those who hate the High Priest John."

We can make a useful comparison of the Targums by taking part of a single verse of the Massoretic text, and showing how the translation developed: *e.g.*, in Gen. 3 22 the Massoretic text says, "And Jhvh Elohim said, Lo! the man has become as one of us to know good and evil." The Targum Onkelos has, "And Jhvh Elohim said, Lo! Adam is the only one in the world knowing good and evil." The Jerusalem Targum has, "And the word of Jhvh Elohim said, Lo! Adam whom I have created is alone in my world, as I am alone in the highest heavens. It shall be that many nations shall spring from him; from him shall go forth a people who will know how to distinguish good and evil." The Targum Pseudo-Jonathan has, "And Jhvh Elohim said to the angels who were ministering in his presence, Lo! Adam is alone in the earth as I am alone in the highest heavens; and it shall be that there will spring from him those who know how to distinguish between good and evil. If he had kept the commands which I enjoined for him he would be living and would be lasting like the tree of life, for ever."

The Targum on Ruth tells us that the famine there mentioned was the sixth in a series of ten great famines decreed by God to be in the world. That in the days of Elisha was the ninth; and the tenth great famine is "yet to come, not a famine of eating bread, nor a thirst of drinking water, but of hearing the word of

prophecy in the sight of Jhvh." The Targum on Ecclesiastes paraphrases 4 13 ("Better is a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king who will no more be admonished") thus:— "Better Abraham, who is the poor youth and in whom is the spirit of prophecy from Jhvh, and to whom Jhvh was known when three years old, and who would not worship an idol, than the wicked Nimrod, who was an old and foolish king. And because Abraham would not worship an idol he threw him into the burning furnace, and a miracle was performed for him of the Lord of the world, and he delivered him from it. Moreover, there was indeed no knowledge in Nimrod that he could be admonished to cease worshipping the idols he had worshipped before." It translates "Be not righteous overmuch" (Ecc. 7 16) by "Be not over-righteous when the wicked is found guilty of death in the court of judgment: so as to have compassion on him, and not to kill him." "All things come alike to all" (Ecc. 9 2) becomes "Everything depends upon the planets: whatever happens to anyone is fixed in heaven." The Targum on the Song of Songs is a fulsome panegyric on the Jewish nation. Of the book of Esther there are two Targums in addition to that of the Megilloth series. Of these the first is short and direct. The second is longer, being full of fanciful romances and rambling fables, arranged in single verses. It is printed in the London Polyglot and introduces an immense amount of matter having nothing corresponding to it in the Hebrew text. As might be expected, the Targums are full of anachronisms and mistakes in history.

We must not, however, imagine that the Targums are value-less. They are sometimes of great importance to the text critic in correcting a false reading. Let one example suffice. The Targum on the Psalms is paraphrastic, yet a jewel of rare value may be found here and there. In Psalm 2 12 we have in our A.V. "Kiss the Son," and since Son has a capital S the translators intended it to refer to the second person in the Trinity; it is so understood

by the average Bible reader. The Revised Version drops the capital S, and puts a note in the margin. "Some ancient versions render, Lay hold of (or Receive) instruction." The word for "Son" in the Hebrew text is *bar*, which is not Hebrew but Aramaic. The text is corrupt, and many have been the conjectures for its emendation. The Syriac has also "Kiss the son," but it gets it simply by a transcription of the Hebrew letters. Now the Targum gives us "Receive instruction," and this is supported by the LXX., "Lay hold of instruction." According to the context there can be no reference to a *Son* either with or without a capital letter. God alone is referred to: "Serve Jhvh with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Receive instruction lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way." Thus the Targum helps to knock another nail in the coffin of the doctrine of the Trinity.

So also in less important matters to us than this the Targum may serve as a help in finding the correct reading; *e.g.*, in Ps. 100 [3] the A.V. reads, "Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves." This is a correct translation of the Hebrew; but a note in the margin (the Ḳerê) corrects the Hebrew, and would have us read "and we are his." This is the rendering of the Revised Version. It is unquestionably the right one, and it is the actual reading of the Targum, which translates, "make it known that Jhvh is God; he made us and we are his, his people and the sheep of his pasture." Another example may be found in Josh. 9 [4], where we are told that the Gibeonites adopted a stratagem to save their lives when Joshua was about to attack their city. The A.V. reads, "they went and made as if they had been ambassadors," which is a correct rendering of the Hebrew text. But several of the old versions [1] including the Targum, read "they got themselves provisions," and these provisions, dry and mouldy, helped, together with their old garments and patched shoes, to give their story the appearance of truth, and Joshua was

1. LXX., Syr., Vulg.

completely deceived. It is noticeable that the change of a single letter[1] in the Hebrew word would give this meaning, and there can be little doubt that it is the correct one.

We must now turn to the two most important Targums, that of Onḳelos, and that on the Prophets.

The TARGUM OF ONḲELOS, on the Pentateuch, is called in the Talmud, the Aḳilas Targum, because it is literal and exact, like the Aquila Version of the Septuagint. It is also called "our Targum" in the Talmud, and is introduced by the words "as we (Babylonians) translate." It is not known who translated it. There is no such person as Onḳelos. The Talmudic name, Aḳilas, expresses merely its character. It originated in Palestine, probably among the followers of R. Aḳiba (150-200 A.D.), though it embodies material long current orally before it was put into writing. But it never became authoritative in Palestine. It was adopted by the Jewish community in Babylonia, being revised and re-edited in the schools there. It began to assume authoritative importance in the 3rd or 4th century A.D. There has been much debate as to its author, the place of its origin, the dialect in which it is written. All that we can say with certainty is that it emanated in its present form from Babylonia about the 4th century A.D. It is written in Aramaic, and is an admirable popular translation of the original Hebrew. It preserves the sense, though in many passages it avoids exact translation. Thus, in the account of the flood (Gen. 7 [2]) "man and woman" of the sex of animals is changed to "male and female." "Elohim" is invariably replaced by Jhvh, in order to avoid even the suspicion of plurality. When it is used of the "strange gods" of outside nations, it is "the error of the peoples." Anthropomorphisms are carefully avoided. "Under the feet of God," in Exod. 24 [10], is rendered "under the throne of his glory." In Gen. 8 [21], "Jhvh smelled a sweet smell," becomes "Jhvh received the sacrifice with grace." Gen. 3 [5], "Ye shall be

1. *d* instead of *r* in yiṯṯayyâru.

like Elohim," becomes "Ye shall be like princes." It is averse to anything that would tend to lower the idea of God in the minds of the people. "With the blast of thy nostrils," Exod. 15 [8], becomes "with the word of thy mouth." "Jhvh is a man of war," Exod. 15 [3], becomes "Jhvh is the Lord of victory in wars." Jhvh does not "come down" from heaven to earth, but "reveals" himself, Gen. 11 [5]. "Jhvh is greater than all gods," becomes "Jhvh is great, and there is no other god beside him," Exod. 18 [11]. Other changes are made to soften the original Hebrew in various ways. Abraham does not pray *to* God (Gen. 20 [17]), but *before* God. Isaac does not go into the field to *walk* (Gen. 24 [63]), but to *pray*. Rachel did not *steal* the Teraphim (Gen. 31 [19]), she *took* them. Jacob did not *flee* from Laban (ib. 22), he *went*. Jacob was an upright man, but he did not dwell in tents (Gen. 25 [27]), "he frequented the house of learning." It was not "the voice of God" that Adam and Eve heard in the Garden, but "the voice of the word of God." And He will not merely "dwell in the tents of Shem" (Gen. 9 [27]), but "He will cause his Shekinah to dwell" there. Changes are sometimes made where there is no apparent reason. In Exod. 3 [1], "he led the flock to the back of the desert," becomes "to the best pasturage in the desert." In Deut. 6 [9], "Thou shalt write them on the door posts," becomes "write and affix them." In accordance with its popular character there is a tendency manifested in the Targum to exalt the character of the nation; *e.g.*, Gen. 49 [15], "Issachar became a tributary servant" is altered to "he shall subdue the provinces of the nations, and destroy their dwelling places, and those that remain there shall serve him to pay tribute to him." There are two passages altered that give a distinctly Messianic meaning:—"Shiloh" (Gen. 49 [10]) and "sceptre" (Num. 24 [17]) is, in both places, "Messiah," and in the latter verse "the star" that comes forth out of Jacob is "a king." [1]

But for the most part the Targum is a literal translation of

1. For numerous other examples, see Deutsch. Remains, pp. 347-56.

the Hebrew text, and in this respect it is a valuable witness to the text critic, in that it confirms the Massoretic readings. Even in passages where changes are made it does not warrant the supposition that the text it translated from deviated from the Massoretic text, for the changes are intentional, either to give conciseness or to explain what needed explanation, or to add dignity or reverence of language. It has not, of course, the same authority, as a witness of the primitive text, as the Septuagint, but of all the Targums it is the most uniformly reliable.

THE TARGUM ON THE PROPHETS, earlier (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings), and later (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve) is ascribed by the Talmud to Jonathan ben Uzziel, a pupil of Hillel the Elder, c. 30, B.C. This, however, is impossible. Jonathan ben Uzziel is, indeed, said to have translated parts of the prophetical books, but whatever of his book, if any, is embodied in the Targum cannot be distinguished. The date is the middle of the 4th century A.D. It has references to events subsequent to Christ; the Temple has been laid in ruins; the Jewish Anti-Christ, Armillus, is referred to in Is. 11 4; the Messiah shall slay him with the breath of his mouth; Rome, the hated tyrant, is frequently alluded to; Germany is mentioned in Ezek. 38 6.

The Targum is the work of many hands. It originated in Palestine, but was edited in Babylon, most probably by R. Joseph, "the blind," President of the school at Pumbeditha, from 319 to 333 A.D., to whom it is ascribed by all ancient authorities (except this one passage in the Talmud). In some places it is literal like that of Onkelos, but in others it is paraphrastic, and much expanded with explanatory matter. R. Joseph is said to have devoted himself to the Targum when he became blind; he added connecting links, filled up lacunæ, and thus gave unity to the separate parts which had been contributed by different writers at various times. It is not so literal as Onkelos, but much more literal than the other Targums. It holds, as it were, a middle

position. Like Onkelos it avoids anthropomorphisms. It has many Messianic passages, and directs attention to the pomp and glory of the Messiah's coming. It looks forward to a time when the house of David shall be restored; when the nation shall cast down all oppressors, and enjoy independent dominion. Its free paraphrastic mode of translation may be seen by comparing Jud. 5^5 in the Revised Version and in the Targum. R.V., "The mountains flowed down at the presence of the Lord, even yon Sinai at the presence of the Lord the God of Israel." The Targum says:—"The mountains dropped down like rain before Jhvh; Mount Tabor, Mount Hermon, and Mount Carmel trembled together, and spoke to one another. This one said, Upon me shall his Shekinah (divine presence) dwell, and to me it shall come. And this one said, Upon me shall his Shekinah dwell, and to me shall it come. But he caused his Shekinah to dwell on Mount Sinai, which was feeble and the least of all mountains. This Sinai was moved and trembled, and its smoke goes up like the smoke of a furnace, because the glory of Jhvh the God of Israel was revealed upon it."

The subtle nature of its power of interpretation directed to inculcate special ideas is seen in Isa. 52^{13}—53^{12}. Here we have the whole history of the Messianic idea reflected as in a mirror. The passage is too long to quote, but I may give a few verses, beginning with "He was despised and rejected; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." It will be an interesting exercise to try to recognise it.

"Then he will become despised, and will cut off the glory of all the kingdoms: they will be prostrate and mourning, like a man of pains and like one destined for sicknesses; and as though the presence of the Shekinah had been withdrawn from us, they will be despised and esteemed not. Then for our sins he will pray, and our iniquities will for his sake be forgiven, although *we* were accounted stricken, smitten from before Jhvh, and afflicted. But he will build up the Holy Place, which has been polluted

for our sins, and delivered to the enemy for our iniquities; and by his instruction peace shall be increased upon us, and by devotion to his words, our sins will be forgiven us. All we like sheep had been scattered, we had each wandered off on his own way; but it was Jhvh's good pleasure to forgive the sins of all of us for his sake. He prayed, and he was answered, and ere even he had opened his mouth, he was accepted; the mighty of the peoples he will deliver up to the slaughter and like a lamb dumb before her shearers; there shall be none before him opening his mouth or saying a word." "He will deliver the wicked into Gehinnom." "It is Jhvh's good pleasure to try and to purify the remnant of his people, so as to cleanse their souls from sin; these shall look on the kingdom of their Messiah, their sons and their daughters shall be multiplied, they shall prolong their days, and those who perform the Law of Jhvh shall prosper in his good pleasure."[1]

You will notice how ingeniously the sense of the Hebrew is completely altered. The servant of Jhvh is called "my servant Messiah." He is not a suffering servant such as the Deutero-Isaiah depicts. On the contrary, he is the prosperous Messiah. The *people* have suffered, and he will deliver them. He will rebuild the Holy Place, and "cause the dominion of the Gentiles to pass away from the land of Israel." It is not he that suffers. It did not please the Lord to bruise him, as Isaiah says, but "the remnant of Jhvh's people." It was *they* who "were accounted stricken, smitten of Jhvh and afflicted." And he, the Messiah "from the subjection of the nations will deliver their souls, and they shall look upon the punishment of those that hate them, and be satisfied with the spoil of their Kings."

It is hardly possible to conceive a more complete perversion of Isaiah's words,—unless it be, indeed, the use some Christians have also made of them. To anyone who wishes to understand the meaning and growth of the Jewish Messianic idea, I

[1] The Jewish Interpreters on Isa. 53, by Driver and Neubauer, pp. 5-6.

recommend this passage in the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel. Let him study it in connection with the idea as presented in the Old Testament, as well as in pre-Christian Messianic literature outside the Bible, and the history of the Jewish Messiah will stand luminous in his mind.

IV.—I have thus tried to show the origin and nature of the Targums on the Old Testament. It is not possible in a short address like the present to give more than a sketch. The few illustrations I have selected can only give a general idea of the character of the translation. For those who wish to know more about them, Deutsch's article in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, published in 1863, still stands unrivalled. It was republished in 1874 in his "Literary Remains."

It will be understood from what I have said that the Targums represent the earliest attempts to translate the Old Testament, beginning possibly 150 years before the Septuagint (3rd Cent. B.C.), though in the form in which we possess them they are much later. The translation was made into a cognate Semitic language, and hence we should expect the translation to be of the highest importance in our efforts to discover the original reading in places where we have reason to doubt the accuracy of the Hebrew. They are of value to the text critic, but by no means of the highest value. Their late date is always a drawback. How much of the original interpretation is represented in them, even in its "liquid stages," cannot be determined. The facility, too, with which the interpreters slipped into paraphrase, and the unconscious habit, or the deliberate intent, of later editors of introducing dogmatic ideas, must always place the Targums in a secondary place for the text critic. Nevertheless, they have their value, and, as I have shown, may occasionally afford a useful guide to modern interpreters who have not yet learned to distinguish between facts and theories concerning the Bible, and are not less eager to find their preconceived dogmatic opinions

confirmed in its pages than were the Jews in the ages of the Targums.

I shall bring this address to a close with a few examples of the use to be made of them as a help in textual criticism.

There is a series of Hebrew texts being published at the present time under the title, "The Sacred Books of the Old Testament; a critical edition of the Hebrew text," by various distinguished scholars, under the general editorial direction of Prof. Haupt. They are admirable examples of modern Biblical scholarship, and if I give one or two examples of emendations that are questionable, I do so with a lively sense of the great value of the texts as a whole, and of the care and immense erudition they evince. The series is a most valuable contribution to the study of the text.

The problem for the text critic is how to find the original text of which our present Hebrew text is a late traditional reproduction. To help to solve it we have the early versions, the Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Syriac Peshitto, the Vulgate, the Targums, and others, all of which must give their testimony before the final decision is made. Sometimes *all* these fail us, and there is nothing left but conjecture and subjective criticism. Now, conjecture must always be subject to doubt. It can never be final. But it is the snare of the text critic, and the more competent the scholar the more irresistible is the temptation. Subjective criticism also is always treacherous, and the reasons for fixing a certain reading adopted by one scholar will be completely shattered by another. Now, in the texts I have mentioned we find much conjecture and many critical emendations of a purely subjective character, hardly one of which can be said to be convincing. A great number are certainly negatived by the evidence of the documents we possess.

Siegfried, for example, thinks that Job 22 11, "or seest thou not the darkness," is wrong, because, he says, "it is void of sense." He accordingly emends, "thou shalt not see thy light because of

the darkness," and in this he receives support from the Septuagint. But on the other hand the Syriac, the Vulgate, and the Targum all support the Massoretic text. The Targum translates: "Thou shalt dwell in darkness, and shalt not see." Moreover, the expression is not "void of sense." Taken in connection with the succeeding clause it is perfectly intelligible:—"Or seest thou not the darkness and the floods of waters that cover thee?" The Hebrew should not be altered.

So Cornill says that Jer. 9 5-6 is wrong;—"They weary themselves to commit iniquity. Thy dwelling is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith Jhvh." It is wrong, he says, "both on material and philological grounds;" and he alters it on the strength of the Septuagint to, "They have sinned. They are too weary to turn. Usury upon usury; deceit upon deceit. They refuse to know me, saith Jhvh." This has no support whatever from the other versions. On the contrary, they are all against it. The Targum which alters in its own way supports the Massoretic text. It says:—"They are stupid; they have gone astray. They sit down in the house of their assembly and talk in deceit over their iniquities: they refuse to know the fear of me, saith Jhvh." Cornill can only get his translation into agreement with the Septuagint, by altering letters, and punctuation, and breaking up words. It is certainly most ingenious, but it proves nothing except that the Septuagint has mistaken the meaning of the Hebrew. The text should not be altered.

One more example must suffice. Wellhausen makes many arbitrary and unwarranted emendations in the Psalms. Take, for example, Ps. 40 6-8, "Sacrifice and offering thou dost not desire: mine ears thou hast opened: burnt offering and sin-offering thou dost not demand. Then said I, Lo, I am come; in the roll of the book it is prescribed to me: I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law is within my heart."

The reading of the Hebrew is supported by the unanimous

testimony of the Versions. The Septuagint indeed reads "a body didst thou prepare for me" instead of "mine ears thou hast opened;" but the difference is possibly due to a confusion of letters in the Greek text. But Wellhausen pays no heed to any of the Versions. "Mine ears thou hast opened," he says, "does not belong to this verse." He therefore transfers it to the next. "Then said I, Lo, I am come," he says, "is meaningless," though it is certainly the servant's answer to his master. "In the roll of the book" could, he says, "be very appropriately joined to "mine ears thou hast opened," and he translates it "mine ears thou hast opened by means of the book of the Law prescribed to me," which doubtless gives an appropriate meaning, but it is neither in the Hebrew nor in any of the Versions. The Hebrew should not be altered. The Targum translates, or rather paraphrases:—"Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears thou hast opened to hear thy salvation; burnt offering and sin-offering thou dost not demand. Then I said, Lo! I will go into eternal life when I have studied in the book of the law what has been written on my account. I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy law is complete in my heart." It may be well to have the opinion of a distinguished critic on the arrangement of a text, and the fitness of its parts; but when the ancient authorities are all against him, we must take their word in preference to his. The Hebrews five or six centuries before Christ did not write with the precision of a 20th century critic; and no subjective improvement can be admitted unless supported by the early documents.

Among these the Targums play, as I have shown, a subordinate, but nevertheless a useful, and even indispensable part.